

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 13 July 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit two letters dated 25 June and 6 July 2012 (see annexes) from Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. In the letter dated 25 June 2012, the African Union requested the United Nations to consider reconfiguring the authorized number and type of helicopters to be supported through the United Nations logistical support package for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), as authorized by Security Council resolution 2036 (2012). In its follow-up letter dated 6 July 2012, the African Union further requested the Security Council to authorize flexibility in the mix of helicopters in support of AMISOM operations, within the overall ceiling of 12 helicopters.

The request is in line with the requirements presented in the Strategic Concept for future operations of AMISOM and reflects its current operational priorities. Furthermore, greater flexibility would allow for maximizing the effectiveness of AMISOM through the timely adjustment of the configuration of its air assets based on operational needs.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) **BAN Ki-moon**



Annex I

Letter dated 25 June 2012 from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the strategic Concept paper and Concept of Operations for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) both underlined the urgent need for air assets as force enablers to support the expanded military operations in all sectors of the AMISOM area of operations. A total of 14 rotary and fixed-wing aircraft were considered appropriate to support the military operations. It was envisaged that the air assets would be based in Sectors 1 and 2, while providing multi-sectoral support. The breakdown was as shown below:

<i>Sector 1</i>		<i>Sector 2</i>	
Attack helicopters	3	Attack helicopters	4
Utility helicopters	2	Utility helicopters	2
Fixed-wing	2	Fixed-wing	1

Security Council resolution 2036 (2012), however, authorized an aviation component of up to a maximum of nine utility helicopters and three attack helicopters. It is observed that the numbers authorized for attack helicopters would impose limitations on AMISOM operations which would require concurrent air support to all Sectors. AMISOM would require at least a se. of three attack helicopters in Sectors 1 and 2 to provide adequate support to AMISOM troops. This is owing to technical operational reasons which require that attack helicopters operate in pairs, with one attack helicopter on standby, to be able to conduct 24/7 day and night operations.

It should be recalled that the lack of air support during the recent AMISOM offensive to open the Afgoye corridor presented serious constraints to both the conduct of the operation and logistics support, particularly in regard to medical evacuation.

In view of the above observations, the reconfiguration of the number and type of helicopters authorized should be considered such that AMISOM would be able to deploy six attack and six utility helicopters. This change will not alter the total authorized number while at the same time will provide more enabling effect as envisaged in the Strategic Concept.

It is confirmed that Kenya has already deployed and Uganda is ready to deploy the following types of helicopters:

<i>Kenya</i>		<i>Uganda</i>	
3	Z9 attack helicopters	3	MI-24 attack helicopters
1	MI-17 utility helicopter	2	MI-17 utility helicopters
1	Puma utility helicopter		

It is worthy to note that this concern was raised in my last report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2036 (2012) (S/2012/468). I would appreciate your consideration of this request taking note of the urgent operational requirements for the helicopters.

(Signed) Jean **Ping**

Annex II

Letter dated 6 July 2012 from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, further to my letter dated 25 June 2012 concerning the mix of rotary-wing capabilities authorized by Security Council resolution 2036 (2012), and as mentioned in my progress report to the Security Council dated 1 June 2012, AMISOM needs to urgently deploy and have the ability to task up to three attack rotary-wing aircraft in support of current operational requirements.

It should be noted that the lack of air assets is impacting on the operational tempo, which has now slowed down while awaiting the deployment of essential attack and utility helicopters in support of operations in Sectors 1, 2 and 3, specifically in Merka, Kismayo and Baidoa.

It is further noted that AMISOM is planning to conduct these operations concurrently in order to take advantage of the ongoing offensive in multiple fronts. Inability to deploy air assets in support of these concurrent operations due to restrictions imposed by Security Council resolution 2036 (2012) on the configuration of the attack and utility helicopters will seriously undermine the success of the operations. Furthermore, air operations imperatives require that attack helicopters only fly in PAIRS to ensure mutual support, with a minimum of one helicopter on standby, and hence the requirement for a minimum of three airframes assigned to either sector, as tasked by the AMISOM Force headquarters at any given time. This requirement was indicated in my letter dated 25 June 2012.

Initial discussions with the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) have indicated that it would welcome this flexibility and that the logistics support package is able to support any mix of 12 helicopters, depending on the tasking of the Force headquarters.

As such, I request that the Security Council endorse flexibility in the mix of helicopters in support of AMISOM operations, and I would be grateful if this letter could be forwarded as a matter of urgency to the Security Council for its consideration.

Meanwhile, due to the operational exigencies, it is my immediate intent to deploy three Ugandan MI-24 attack and two MI-17 utility helicopters to Mogadishu to support the offensive in Sector 1, and at the same time make available the three Kenyan Z9 attack helicopters and two utility helicopters, one Puma and one MI-17, in support of ongoing operations in Sector 2. These assets will be also available for tasking in support of operations in other Sectors. In an effort to remain within the intent of Security Council resolution 2036 (2012), I want to assure you that only three attack helicopters will be tasked at any one time and thus flying hours will be maintained within UNSOA support package limits.

(Signed) Jean Ping